



MENTAL HEALTH, DEPRESSION, STRESS, ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT – A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Mental Health is important for the growth and development of every society. In the same manner Academic Achievement is of vital importance for the growth and advancement of every student. But there are certain elements of Depression that affects both mental health and academic achievement of students. Therefore the researcher has investigated a study into the relationship between Mental Health, Depression, Stress, and Anxiety on Academic Achievement of the students. The paper is qualitative in nature and the Researchers have made an extensive study of the related articles, journals and books only to explore the relationship between mental health and academic achievement, depression and academic achievement and anxiety and academic achievement.

Keywords: Mental Health, Depression, Stress, Anxiety and Academic Achievement.

Introduction

Mental Health is significant for the growth and development of every society and for a healthy and happy life. The definition of health includes mental health along with its physical, emotional, social and spiritual components. It impacts on how we manage our surroundings and make choices in our lives. The World

Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution for her or his community”. It refers to full and harmonious functioning of total personality which gives satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment. Mental health is multi-dimensional construct that includes both cognitive and emotional elements.

According to Ghani, (2013), mental health is a prosperous state in which an individual is aware of his own abilities, can handle pressure well, can work productively and able contribute to society. This means that mental health as the fundamental to the well-being of individuals and ability of society's to function more effectively. In short, mental health is the manifestation of emotion that signifies a capacity to adjust to the various stresses and anxieties of life.

At least 13.7 per cent of India's general population has been projected to be suffering from a variety of mental illnesses; and 10.6 per cent of this requires immediate intervention. Specifically, the phenomenon of mental health problems and mental illness have increased due to the advent of turmoil which has led to the self-inhalation of people in Kashmir. Nearly



24,000 men and women, mostly young, have attempted suicide in the last 17 years in Kashmir. Of them about 3,000 have been successful. Shockingly, most of them were between the age group of 16 and 25. The figures point to a psychological catastrophe in the conflict-ridden Kashmir valley. Three to four people are admitted to SMHS Hospital on a daily basis, the main health centre in Srinagar. Rising suicidal tendencies amongst people is a matter of grave concern in the Valley where people have been witnessing conflict and violence from point blank range. "There was an advanced study of suicidal behaviour in India in 1980's where it was found that the rate of suicide was lowest in Jammu and Kashmir. Now the situation is entirely different," says Dr Arshad Hussain, a consultant at the Department of Psychiatry in Government Medical College, Srinagar. According to the study in 1980, the suicide rate was 0.1-0.2 per 1, 00,000 per year. It has now risen to 20 per 1, 00,000, almost twice the national average of 11 per one lakh. The statistics of the World Health Organization (WHO) for 2005 reveals that the rate of suicides amongst Muslims is 0.1 to 0.2 per 1, 00,000. An average of 3.5 attempts of self-annihilation on a daily basis in the last three years has made suicide the second most dreaded thing, after violence, in the Valley. While it is estimated that nearly 70,000 lives have been lost in the state since militancy erupted in 1989, attempted suicides during this period has run into thousands. In 2004, 1,137 people tried to take their own lives, 62 died. It is pertinent to mention here that the report by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2005) revealed that issues of mental health are likely to increase with 15 % in the year 2020 and the

adolescents are in the highest risk group who might be experiencing this problem.

These statistical numbers reveal that the mental health problem among the Kashmiri population is becoming increasingly critical and worrying. Worse still, the percentage indicated above is inclusive of students who are the front-runners of any country. Lower or poor of mental health level will lead to increased rates of suicide if it not carefully taking care of from the beginning. Therefore, it is important to raise the awareness of mental health illness and to promote positive mental health practices among the Kashmiri People.

The definitions of mental are diverse but there is some similarity among them. For example most of the definitions defined mental health as a component of emotions, intellectual ability to perform well. In short mental health is the expression of emotions or is the capacity to face challenges and deal effectively with the demands of life.

Constructs of Mental Health

Clark and Watsons model of mental health shows three factors that influence the mental health of an individual and are overlapping with each other. These factors are Depression Anxiety and Stress. Thus, this study is based on Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS).

1. Depression : Around the world depression is a serious and complex disorder that shakes nearly 121 million people (MMHA, 2008). The depressive syndrome in young people has been estimated at 10 to 30% by some researchers (Hammen & Rudolph, 2003). Edwards and Holden (2001) found that among college students seeking counseling services, anxiety and depression were ranked first and third as presenting problems. It involves



feelings of sadness (Sarason & Sarason, 2002). Symptoms like weak, frustrated, desperate, helpless and hopeless are common individuals (Wick-Nelson & Israel, 2003). They are usually in low-level of mood and are discontented with the things around them. Hysenbegasi, Hass, and Rowland (2005) conducted a study to determine the relationship between depression and academic performance. In this study, there were two groups: the control group, and students with depression. The control group had no diagnosis of depression, and no self-report of at least three symptoms of depression while the students with depression were diagnosed at the on-campus Health Centre.

Depression can be an interruption to every aspect of a person's life, especially one's academic performance. Students are confronted with numerous issues such as separation from their families, entrance into a new environment and adaptation to educational standards causes high level of depression

2. Anxiety: Anxiety is a feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and a kind worry associated with arousal of the nervous system (Spielberger, 1983). Anxiety is one of the wide varieties of emotional and behaviour disorders (Rachel and Chidsey, 2005). The psychological symptoms of anxiety among students include nervousness before a tutorial class, panicking, going blank during a test, feeling helpless while doing assignments, or lack interest in a difficult subject whereas the physiological symptoms of anxiety include sweaty palms, cold, nervousness, panic, fast pace of breathing, racing heartbeat, or an upset stomach (Ruffins, 2007). Anxiety is one

of the psychophysiology difficulties (Callahan, 2001).

Breuer (1999) mentioned that all anxiety disorders are defined by the dual characteristics of excessive emotional fear and physiologic hyper arousals. Sarason in Harris et al. (2003) defined that anxiety is a basic human emotion consisting of apprehension and uncertainty that typically appears when an individual perceives an occurrence as being a threat to the ego or self-esteem. Spielberger's (1995) Anxiety is emotional state consisting of feeling, tension, apprehension, and its effects on nervous system.

3. Stress: Stress refers to the sum of physical, mental and emotional strains or tensions on a person. It is defined as a condition typically characterized by symptoms of mental and physical tension or strain as hypertension, which can result from a reaction to a situation in which a person feels threatened or pressured or both. According to the Hans Selye model, stress is divided into eustress and distress. The stress which enhances function (physical or mental, such as through strength training or challenging work) is called eustress, while persistent stress that is not resolved through coping or adaptation and may lead to anxiety or withdrawal (depression) behaviour is known as distress. Stress also often exists among students especially in the aspects of academics (Shamsuddin, et al, 2013), workload (Tangade et al, 2011), environment and financial resources (Andrew & Wilding, 2004). Therefore, the stress is one of the contributing factors to mental health.

Learning and memory can be affected by stress, too much stress can cause physical and mental health problems (Laio, Lu & Yi, 2007), reduce self-esteem (Bressler & Bressler, 2007) and may affect the academic



achievement of students (Elliot, Shell, Henry & Maeir, 2005; Marcos & Tillema, 2006; Hofer, 2007; Rafidah, Azizah, & Noraini, 2007).

Academic Achievement

Job performance is regarded as an activity in which individuals efficaciously achieve the task assigned to them, subject to the normal restraints of reasonable utilization of the accessible resources (Landsbergis, 2003). Performance within the school system is evaluated by academic performance, which is a function of students study habit (Abid, 2006). Academic achievement is defined as the knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects, generally designed by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers. Therefore Academic achievement is an outcome of education and is measured with the cumulated grade point average at the end of a year or program. It is the single gauge that stand for all stress measurement categories and the quality of time a learner spends at school. The demand placed by society on students to excel through different levels of education (Ang and Huan, 2006) continues to support the position held in academia and corporate world that school grades remain the best predictors of tertiary education performance and subsequently, an indicator of excellent job performance (Kuncelel et al., 2005; Smits et al., 2002).

Relation between Depression and Academic Achievement

Results from previous studies reveal that, depression is a common problem among adolescents (Steinberg, 1999). A study conducted by Sherina et al, (2003) found out that 41.9 % of students in a public institution in Malaysia were faced with depression problem.

Shamsuddin (2013) discovered that, students aged between 20 and 24 are most affected by depression. The senior students (age 20 to 24) obtained higher depression scores compared with their junior students (age 18 to 19). The reason why senior students experienced higher level of depression was due to increased workload or assignments during final year of studies. Hysenbegasi, Hass, and Rowland (2005) conducted a study to determine the relationship between depression and academic performance. In this study, there were two groups: the control group, and students with depression. The results of this study indicated that a diagnosis of depression was associated with a lower GPA. In addition, depressed students reported missing more class, tests and assignments compared to the control group. They also dropped more courses and missed more social events. According to Fine and Carlson (1994) the common symptoms of depression among students are difficulty in concentrating, lack of interest and motivation and poor attendance. These symptoms actually justify why a depressed students does not achieve much in academic performance. Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that the depression will negatively affect the performance of students in their academic career.

Relationship between Anxiety and Academic Achievement

The perspective of anxiety and academic performance is adopted from Catastrophe theory which explains about the relationship of anxiety and performance. It is important to understand the theory and the influence of anxiety upon performance. Martin in Robb (2005) proposed that cognitive anxiety would have negative correlation with performance



and physiological anxiety have curvilinear relationship with performance. The cognitive anxiety is the component that most strongly affects performance (Ingugiro, 1999; Robb, 2005). The Researcher demonstrated that students with higher level of anxiety tend to obtain lower marks in their end-of-semester examination (Hamzah, 2007). Researches has been conducted to see the correlation of anxiety and the influence of academic achievement, student with high anxiety levels would have lower academic achievement among high school students (McCraty, 2007). Others expressed the opinion that the high level of anxiety will be associated with low academic performance (Luigi et al., 2007, and Sena et al., 2007). A positive relationship between high degrees of academic achievement and low anxiety level (El-Anzi, 2005). In conclusion, the effect of anxiety is equivocal. If the level of anxiety is too high, it might negatively influence the academic performance. On the contrary, low level of anxiety might serve as a motivator to encourage student to put more effort in learning, and in turn, leading to a higher academic performance.

Relationship between Stress and Academic Achievement

Students are prone to stress because of increasing learning workload, such as accomplishing assignment and projects. Furthermore, the education system that focuses in examination achievement has caused stress among students. In order to get a better result in the examinations, attending tuition classes has occupied the students' leisure and recreation time. Likewise, Tangade et al (2011) also asserted that the stress is often caused by heavy workload, whereas

time for rest is limited, especially during the final year if studies. Apart from that, family and parents' are also a contributor to the stress of students. Students struggle to live up to their parents' expectation (e.g., to get first class degree) and this will induce high amount of stress among students (Ariffin, 2014).

A large number of research show that stress is significantly correlated with academic achievement. High level of stress has a negative impact on learning. Therefore, it is important to help students to cope with stress and guide them to the right path. It is noteworthy that lecturers and parents have to work hand in hand to battle the issue, otherwise the stressed students will be feeling hopeless, isolated, and left out of society.

Conclusion

Mental health can be conceptualised as an emotional well-being that is affected by the elements of depression, anxiety, and stress. As discussed in the paper it is quite evident that the number of existing research findings have exposed a relationship between mental health, depression, anxiety, and stress, and academic achievement. To conclude we can say that extreme and awareness on the topic of mental health should be promoted among the students so that early diagnosis can prevent the problem of mental health.

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